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Dear Appropriation Committee Members:

I believe the Independent Living Centers in Connecticut help those with disabilities find resources they did not know about. Our staff gives these people a sense of feeling as they belong in the community, not as outcasts. We help them gain a voice and teach them how to advocate for themselves. Of the many consumers in which I have helped, I have seen them obtain self-confidence, stand up for themselves, take better care of their health, and appearance. It simply makes sense for the Centers to lose funding and close down because we also teach individuals skills to maintain living within their community, becoming independent to live in their own private dwellings. We help these individuals accomplish goals to be a part of society. For the small contribution from the state of \$528,000 the state gets a return of over 10,000,000!

We also help other organizations help their clients. Help them with Assistive Technology, referrals, resources, volunteer in the offices. Offer support groups for them to connect with others whom have similar disabilities.

I ask that the committee does the right thing and restores the Centers full funding. Its time to stop fixing budget gaps on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens.